DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 391 104 CE 070 786

AUTHOR Friedenberg, Joan E.
TITLE The Vocational and Language Development of Limited English Proficient Adults. Information Series No. 363.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Columbus, Ohio.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 95
CONTRACT RR93002001
NOTE 82p.
AVAILABLE FROM Center on Education and Training for Employment, 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1090 (order no. IN 363, $8).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Bilingual Education; Immigrants; *Language Acquisition; *Limited English Speaking; Private Sector; Public Sector; *Second Language Instruction; *Second Language Learning; Vocational Education; *Vocational English (Second Language)

ABSTRACT

This critical review of the literature examines the characteristics and needs of limited English proficient (LEP) adults and the programs and services typically available to them. The complexities of the LEP population are explored first, including differences in education, English proficiency, labor market experience, and economic status. Availability of programs and services for LEP adults in both the public and private sectors is described. Private sector initiatives in business and industry and community-based organizations are discussed. The vocational instructional delivery system for LEP persons includes several approaches: bilingual education, "sheltered" content instruction, and multilingual/multicultural methods. To increase awareness of the issues involved, the paper discusses how people acquire a second language and what methods are most beneficial in aiding second language development. The monograph concludes by decrying the lack of reliable information about the LEP population and the bias against instruction in the native language. Recommendations for improving access to programs and services encompass a number of areas: enforcement of civil rights legislation, more support for bilingual/multilingual instruction, improvement in the research base, more training for service providers, and collaboration among organizations. The paper contains 60 references and a glossary. (SK)

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# The Vocational and Language Development of Limited English Proficient Adults

*Information Series No. 363*

Joan E. Friedenberg

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# The Vocational and Language Development *of Limited English Proficient Adults*

*Information Series No. 363*

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1995

# Funding Information


| | |
|---|---|
| **Project Title:** | ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education |
| **Contract Number:** | RR93002001 |
| **Act under Which Administered:** | 41 USC 252 (15) and P.L. 92-318 |
| **Source of Contract:** | Office of Educational Research and Improvement<br>U.S. Department of Education<br>Washington, DC 20208 |
| **Contractor:** | Center on Education and Training for Employment<br>The Ohio State University<br>Columbus, Ohio 43210-1090 |
| **Executive Director:** | Ray D. Ryan |
| **Disclaimer:** | This publication was prepared pursuant to a contract with the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official U.S. Department of Education position or policy. |
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# Foreword

The Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education (ERIC/ACVE) is 1 of 16 clearinghouses in a national information system that is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education. This paper was developed to fulfill one of the functions of the clearinghouse—interpreting the literature in the ERIC database. This paper should be of interest to vocational educators working with limited English proficient learners.

ERIC/ACVE would like to thank Joan E. Friedenberg for her work in the preparation of this paper. Dr. Friedenberg is Professor and Director of the Center for English as a Second Language at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Previously, she was Associate Professor at California State University, San Marcos, and Research Specialist at the Ohio State University. She has extensive experience in teaching, writing, research, and project management in the areas of bilingual/multicultural/second language education, special populations, and vocational English as a second language. She is currently the VESL representative on the steering board of the English for Specific Purposes Special Interest Group, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages; and a member of the Research Committee and the Committee on Trade and Industrial Teacher/Teacher Education Professional Standards, National Association of Industrial and Technical Teacher Educators.

The following people are also acknowledged for their critical review of the manuscript prior to publication: Mary Gershwin, Executive Director, Colorado Workplace Education, Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System; John Wiley, Workplace Literacy Coordinator, Career Resources Development Center; Miriam Burt, Associate Director, Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education; and Diane Belcher, Director, ESL Composition, the Ohio State University.

Publication development was coordinated by Susan Imel. Sandra Kerka edited the manuscript, and Janet Ray served as word processor operator.

Ray D. Ryan
Executive Director
Center on Education and Training
for Employment

# Executive Summary

The interdisciplinary nature of vocational and language development for limited English proficient (LEP) adults has often led to their becoming marginalized. At the same time, the skill needs of the work force and the growth in immigrant populations make it clear that access to high quality vocational training and appropriate English as a second language services is critical to the economic and social survival of the United States. This critical review of the literature examines the characteristics and needs of LEP adults and the programs and services typically available to them. The complexities of the LEP population are explored first: differences in education, English proficiency, labor market experience, and economic status make it imperative that they not be treated as a monolithic group.

Availability of programs and services for LEP adults in both the public and private sectors is described. In the public sector, these include mainstream vocational education, federally funded programs, and special programs. Private sector initiatives in business and industry and community-based organizations are discussed. The vocational instructional delivery system for LEP persons includes several approaches: bilingual education, "sheltered" content instruction, and multilingual/multicultural methods. To increase awareness of the issues involved, the paper discusses how people acquire a second language and what methods are most beneficial in aiding second language development.

The monograph concludes by decrying the lack of reliable information about the LEP population and the bias against instruction in the native language. Recommendations for improving access to programs and services encompass a number of areas: enforcement of civil rights legislation, more support for bilingual/multilingual instruction, improvement in the research base, more training for service providers, and collaboration among organizations.

Information on vocational and language development for limited English proficient adults may be found in the ERIC database using the following descriptors: Adult Education, Bilingual Education, Immigrants, *Language Acquisition, *Limited English Speaking, Private Sector, Public Sector, *Second Language Instruction, *Second Language Learning, Vocational Education, *Vocational English (Second Language). Asterisks indicate descriptors that are particularly relevant.

# Introduction

The issues related to the vocational and language development of limited English proficient (LEP) adults are, by nature, interdisciplinary. They encompass, at the very least, the fields of English as a second language (ESL), multicultural education, vocational special needs education, bilingual education, adult education, and labor. Although being interdisciplinary can allow for enjoying the best practices from all fields, more often it has resulted in the LEP population falling through the cracks or becoming marginalized. For example, the field of ESL has historically placed a strong emphasis on the language development of visiting foreign university students; the fields of multicultural education and bilingual education have strong emphases on elementary school children; vocational special needs education has a strong focus on the needs of students with disabilities and, to some extent, disadvantaged students; and both labor and adult education focus mostly on academically or economically disadvantaged English-speaking adults.

The purpose of this monograph is to present a critical review of the literature and to offer practical suggestions with relation to the vocational and language development of LEP adults in the United States. It presents a review of the literature regarding the characteristics and needs of LEP adults and programs and services typically available to them, with regard to their vocational and English language development. It also presents effective practices from the fields of bilingual education and ESL, keeping in mind three important goals: vocational development, English language development, and a strong self-concept through multicultural awareness. A glossary of terms used throughout this monograph is provided.

# Characteristics and Needs of the Adult LEP Population

Discussing the characteristics and needs of LEP adults can be complicated by many factors. LEP adults come from all parts of the world. They may be immigrants or nonimmigrants, documented or undocumented, and they represent a variety of types or classifications of immigrants. The U.S. Census is the main source of demographic information concerning these populations; however, the reliability of such data is compromised by the fact that limited English proficiency is based on self-report, that undocumented immigrants generally avoid "government officials" such as census takers, and that census forms and interviewers cannot accommodate the more than 100 languages spoken in this country.

In 1980 nearly 7 million documented LEP persons lived in the United States; the projected number for 1990 (in 1988) was 11.6 million; and the projected number for the year 2000 was 17.4 million (Willette, Haub, and Tordella 1988). Since these data were based on the 1980 U.S. Census, it probably would have been safe to assume that many undocumented LEP persons, approximately 4-6 million (National Commission on Employment Policy 1988) and increasing by 500,000 per year (Willette et al. 1988), went uncounted and that the number of LEP persons residing in the nation today, based on those 1980 Census data, would probably be close to 15 million. However, 1990 Census data indicate that there are actually 32 million documented speakers of other languages in the United States, of whom 44 percent self-report that they speak English "less than very well," bringing the documented number of LEP persons in 1990 to more than 14 million, about 2.5 million more than was projected in 1988. Again, if the estimated number of 500,000 annual documented immigrants is added, then there are likely 16.5 million documented limited English proficient persons residing in the United States and 19 million if the estimated

**1990 Census data indicate that there are actually 32 million documented speakers of other languages in the United States.**

number of annual undocumented immigrants is counted. The 1990 Census also indicates that two-thirds of all speakers of other languages in the nation are adults between 18 and 64 years old. Although the majority of persons who speak a native language other than English were born in this country (Friedenberg 1987), only one-third of those who are LEP were born here (Willette et al. 1988).

A substantial number of documented immigrants have entered the United States as refugees. In fact, since World War II, over 2 million refugees have been admitted to the United States (Forbes 1985; NCEP 1988). Refugee arrivals are tied closely to world events, and refugees have generally arrived here in waves. For example, large waves of Cubans arrived from 1959-1962 (215,000), from 1965-1973 (340,000), and then during the Mariel Boat lift in 1980 (125,000) (Willette et al. 1988). Similarly, large waves of Southeast Asian refugees arrived in the spring of 1975 (170,000) and then between 1975-1986 (about 700,000) (Mason 1987). Other refugees have recently arrived from China, Indonesia, Korea, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Nicaragua (Forbes 1985) and even more recently from Eastern Europe, Somalia, and Haiti.

## *National Backgrounds of LEP Persons*

During the 1950s, Europeans constituted over half of all documented immigrants (nearly 53 percent), whereas in the 1970s, they constituted only about 15 percent (Espenshade, Bean, Goodis, and White 1988). During the 1980s, the largest group of documented LEP persons, approximately 56 percent, was Hispanic (Willette et al. 1988). These included, in order of group size, Mexicans, Central and South Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Dominicans (de la Rosa and Maw 1990). The next largest group, approximately 27 percent, was White, non-Hispanic, including Russians, Poles, Ukrainians, and other Eastern Europeans; other Europeans; persons from the Middle East and North Africa; Australians; White South Africans; and Canadians. Thirteen percent were Asian, including Southeast Asians (Vietnamese, Laotians, and Khmer), Koreans, Japanese, Chinese, Indians, Thai, Filipinos, Samoans, and other Pacific Islanders. About 2 percent were Black, non-Hispanic, including persons from Africa and the Caribbean and 2 percent were "other" non-Hispanic (mostly Native Americans).

### Undocumented Immigrants

Approximately 75 percent of undocumented immigrants are from Latin America. A substantial number of these comes from or through Mexico. About half of the undocumented population in the United States lives in California (Willette et al. 1988).

### Nonimmigrant LEP Persons

Approximately 36 percent of the adult LEP population is nonimmigrant (i.e., born in the United States). Approximately 60 percent of these are Hispanic and of the Hispanics, over half are Mexican-American and nearly 35 percent are Puerto Rican (Willette et al. 1988). Other nonimmigrant LEP adults may include Native Americans, Alaskan and Hawaiian Natives, and the children of immigrants from other national backgrounds.

## *Education and English Proficiency*

During the 1980s, LEP adults had a median educational level of 9.4 years compared with non-LEP adults, whose median educational level was 12.1 years (Willette et al. 1988). The median educational level for migrant farm workers was 7.7 (Willette et al. 1988). The number of documented LEP adults who are not high school graduates was estimated to be nearly 4 million in 1990 and is projected to be nearly 6 million by the year 2000 (Willette et al. 1988). Again, these do not include a substantial number of undocumented immigrants. The Business Council for Effective Literacy (1987) reports that up to 86 percent of non-English speakers who are illiterate in English are also illiterate in their native language.

### Educational Level of Refugees as a Group

The educational level of refugees has produced quite a distinct pattern. Generally, the first waves of refugees included the most educated. Southeast Asian refugees who arrived in the United States during the first wave (from 1975-1978) were largely urban Vietnamese, including professionals, civil servants, military officers, business persons, and their families. By

contrast, the second wave (arriving after 1978) were from both the urban and rural areas of Vietnam, Kampuchea (formerly Cambodia), and Laos, including shopkeepers, soldiers, farmers, fishermen, and their families (Mason 1987). Similarly, the first wave of Cubans also included the upper and middle classes, whereas the "Mariel Boat lift" refugees included largely unskilled and semiskilled persons. This pattern is understandable given that it is the upper classes who have the most to lose and the least to gain from new communist or socialist governments.

### Educational Level of Hispanic Persons as a Group

Although not all Hispanic persons are LEP, over half (56 percent) of the LEP persons in the United States speak Spanish (Willette et al. 1988). De la Rosa and Maw (1990) have tracked the educational achievement of Hispanic persons for decades and make the following generalizations: Hispanic persons remain the most undereducated major segment of the U.S. population; only 55 percent of Hispanics between 18 and 24 years old have completed high school; 51 percent of Hispanics over 25 years old have completed high school; only 45 percent of Hispanic persons over 35 years old have completed high school; Mexican-Americans have the lowest levels of educational attainment; illiteracy rates are much higher for Hispanics than for Blacks or Whites; and limited English proficiency is strongly associated with not completing high school. Indeed, Perez and Martinez (1993) found that the high school completion rate for Hispanics over 25 continues to be only about 50 percent, compared to 75 percent for non-Hispanics over 25. The National Commission on Employment Policy (NCEP 1988) found that undocumented Mexicans tend to be less educated than other undocumented immigrants.

### English Proficiency

Willette et al. (1988) found that among all LEP persons, the likelihood of becoming English proficient was greatest within 10 years following immigration to the United States. After this time, the likelihood decreased. They also found that both immigrant and native-born Hispanics had higher rates of limited

English proficiency than any other ethnic or national groups in the United States. Forbes (1985) found that there was a strong association between English proficiency and literacy in the native language and that about 90 percent of refugees were limited English proficient when they arrive here. Forbes also cites a longitudinal study by the Northwest Education Regional Lab (NWREL) in which four groups of refugees were followed for gains in English proficiency: (1) those taking language training classes; (2) those having a combination of training and work; (3) those in work only; and (4) those in neither. Despite the fact that those in some type of work experience began with higher levels of English proficiency, the language training group had more gains in English during the 2-year period of the investigation and ended up surpassing the language abilities of all the other groups. At first glance, these results seem to conflict with the latest research in second language acquisition, which shows that greater gains are made in English when it is learned in a natural environment than when it is learned in an artificial classroom situation. However, upon further reflection, it is entirely possible that the nature of the "natural environment" for those in the working groups was such that they were carrying out manual labor and that no meaningful exposure to the English language really took place. In the same way, it is also possible that those in the "artificial" language training situation were exposed to the latest in natural and communicative techniques and that the classroom environment was not that artificial after all.

In sum, LEP adults have attained lower levels of education than average and, obviously, have lower levels of English proficiency.

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## *Employment*

A century ago, most of the immigrants entering the United States came from Europe. Today, fewer than 5 percent of documented immigrants come from Europe, and 90 percent come from Asia and Latin America. Groups from Asia and Latin America and undocumented persons have tended to be disproportionately unskilled or semiskilled (NCEP 1988). According to Willette et al. (1988), the most important factors affecting

labor market participation by LEP persons were English proficiency and having marketable skills. They found that—

> limited English proficiency has a negative influence on access to the U.S. labor market and on occupational choice. . . . English language deficiency has a greater negative effect in the skilled occupations where wages are highest. . . . Immigrants with little or no English and few transferable skills are often relegated to entry-level, low-paying occupations where knowing English is not a necessity. (p. 28)

**Labor Market Experience of Refugees as a Group**

When examining the labor market and employment status of refugees, Forbes (1985) noted that length of time in the United States, educational level attained in the home country, English proficiency, and household size influenced employment status. Forbes compared labor market participation of refugees who had arrived in the United States in 1975 with the participation of those who had arrived in 1983 and 1984 and found a 67.3 percent participation rate for the first group by the end of 1984 and only about a 30-40 percent participation rate among the latter group. However, Forbes seems to fail to take into consideration the vast differences in the educational levels between these two waves of refugees, which could account, at least in part, for the difference in labor market participation. Forbes also noted that education in the refugees' countries of origin was among the strongest predictors of U.S. labor market success and that each additional year of education before arriving resulted in a three percentage point advantage in the labor market. English language proficiency was shown to produce labor market advantages for refugees, as well. Forbes found that 60 percent of refugees who spoke English well were employed in 1983, whereas only 25 percent of those who were LEP were employed. However, interestingly, Forbes also found that refugees enrolled in English classes were less likely to be in the labor force (i.e., not even searching for work). It was not possible to identify the direction of this causal relationship (i.e., whether refugees sought English training classes because they could not find work or whether they did not seek work because they were

enrolled in English classes). Finally, Forbes also found that refugees living alone and those living in households with multiple families tended to have higher rates of employment than refugees living in nuclear or extended family situations and she suggests some reasons for this: it is difficult for families with many children to support themselves on the typical kinds of employment available to refugees and it is difficult for both adults to seek employment when at least one must stay home and care for children. Although many refugees have found employment, most are employed at the lowest levels of industry, in low-paying, low-skilled jobs that offer little job stability or opportunity for advancement (Forbes 1985).

### Labor Market Experience of Immigrants as a Group

The National Commission on Employment Policy (1988) found that immigrants, in general, are more likely than native-born citizens to be in the labor force (possibly because their average age as a population is concentrated more in the prime working years); their unemployment rates are higher than those for native-born Whites, but lower than those for native-born African Americans and Hispanics. Immigrants' earnings are lower than those of native-born workers. This is especially true for Hispanic workers.

### Labor Market Experiences of Immigrants and Nonimmigrants as a Group

It is important to remember that not all LEP persons are immigrants and that not all immigrants are LEP. Willette et al. (1988) found that LEP men have somewhat higher rates of unemployment or nonparticipation in the labor force (nearly 21 percent) than English-proficient men (16 percent) and that the same is true for LEP women (55 percent) and English-proficient women (42 percent). The disparity is more severe in terms of earnings. LEP men earn 33 percent less than English-proficient men; LEP women earn 58 percent less than English-proficient men and English-proficient women earn 45 percent less than English-proficient men. The percentage of U.S.-born LEP adults employed is about 55 percent.

### Employment and Earnings of Hispanic Persons a Group

De la Rosa and Maw (1990) examined the employment and labor market status of Hispanics and found that Hispanics have much higher unemployment rates than non-Hispanics and that Hispanic men have a higher labor force participation rate (i.e., looking for work) than any other population group, male or female. In contrast, Hispanic women have the lowest labor force participation of any population group. Perez and Martinez (1993) report that Hispanic families with a worker are more likely than comparable African American and White families to live in poverty; that Hispanic median earnings are lower than White or African American median earnings; and that Hispanics continue to be overrepresented in lower skilled jobs. Again, it is important to remember that, although not all Hispanics are LEP, over half of the LEP population is Hispanic.

Finally, NCEP (1988) found that immigrants and refugees are more likely than native-born persons to be self-employed workers in family enterprises or workers in small firms owned and operated by persons from their country of origin. In addition, living in ethnic enclaves often increases chances for immigrants to find such employment. In sum, LEP adults as a group are unskilled or semiskilled persons who have higher than average rates of unemployment and lower than average earnings.

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## *Economic Status*

LEP adults are more than twice as likely to live below the poverty level as English-proficient adults. Based on the 1980 Census, almost half of LEP adults lived in poverty, compared with 25 percent of English-proficient adults (Willette et al. 1988). The 1990 Census indicates that the situation has not improved, with about 50 percent of LEP adults earning less than $8,000 per year (Chisman, Wrigley, and Ewen 1993). One-third of the U.S.-born LEP population lives below the poverty level. Of Hispanic groups, Puerto Ricans fare the worst economically (31 percent living below the poverty level), followed by Mexicans. Nearly half of Hispanic families headed by females live in poverty and mainland U.S. households headed by Puerto Rican women suffer poverty rates of over 64 percent

(Perez and Martinez 1993). Forbes (1985) found that over half of refugees live below the poverty level and that households dependent on public assistance, as well as large households not receiving public assistance, were most likely to be poor. English proficiency strongly affected the economic status of refugees and, although English proficiency may not be a strong factor in labor market participation in general, it does affect the capacity to earn enough wages to raise the household income out of poverty (ibid.). In sum, LEP adults, as a group, are poor.

## *Enrollment in Vocational Education*

Participation rates by LEP adults in vocational education programs are one of the best ways to ascertain whether LEP adults have had access to such programs. Unfortunately, since the suspension of VEDS (Vocational Education Data System) in 1983, these data have not been readily available. As Phelps (1991) pointed out when discussing enrollment and participation data, "Unfortunately, there is only limited data of questionable reliability to report" (p. 5). Researchers interested in vocational enrollment data must now rely on other databases. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) was mandated by the Perkins legislation to maintain vocational education enrollment data, which is done using the longitudinal data set, High School and Beyond (HS&B), that was established by the U.S. Department of Education in 1980. Based on HS&B data, Phelps reported that high school students from non-English-speaking families were severely underrepresented in vocational education programs. Students from non-English-speaking families took fewer Carnegie units in vocational education than all other groups of students and, whereas 21 percent of the total sample of students concentrated in vocational education, only 11 percent of students from non-English-speaking homes did. Students from non-English-speaking homes who were less likely to concentrate in one occupational area tended to "shop around" when enrolling in vocational education. The lack of concentrated study, of course, lessens the likelihood of enjoying one of the benefits of vocational education, skilled employment.

Phelps did not report postsecondary data; however, Hoachlander, Kaufman, Levesque, and Houser (1992) reported that

although 71 percent of all students enrolled in postsecondary programs had taken at least one course in vocational education, 75 percent of students from non-English-speaking homes had. These data not only tell us very little, they can be misleading. For example, they did not address limited English proficiency, only students coming from homes where English was not the primary language. Second, they did not report the percentage of "non-English" students who were actually admitted to postsecondary programs, only the enrollment patterns of those who were already admitted. This is significant because many LEP students are denied entrance into postsecondary institutions, except perhaps to take an ESL class. Therefore, without knowing the actual number of "non-English" students, compared to the actual number of all students on whom these percentages are based, it would be entirely inappropriate to make any assumptions about participation in postsecondary vocational education by LEP adults. Additionally, it was not known whether a course in vocational ESL (often funded by vocational moneys) was considered vocational. Finally, access to postsecondary vocational education by special populations based on enrollment in only one course seems unreasonable. For example, the standard used to designate a vocational concentrator for secondary vocational education is four courses in one vocational area. Enrollment in one class tells us very little about membership by special populations in a program that leads to career development. In sum, given the exclusionary policies of most postsecondary programs and the ill-defined way in which both limited English proficiency and participation in postsecondary vocational education are treated in most of the data sets, there is currently no reliable way to know the extent to which LEP adults have had access to postsecondary vocational programs.

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# Availability of Programs and Services for LEP Adults

In theory, LEP adults should have numerous outlets for appropriate vocational and English language training. These may include regular programs in adult technical centers, community colleges, propriety schools, community organizations, or on the job, or they may include specially designed JTPA, refugee, amnesty, workplace literacy, or BVT programs. This section reviews critically the literature related to how well LEP adults have had access to high quality vocational and English language instruction in regular public institutions and specially designed programs in public institutions and in private institutions.

## *Programs and Services in Public Institutions*

Upon the inception of BVMMT (Bilingual Vocational Materials, Methods, and Techniques) funding from the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976, most of the research addressing LEP vocational students was supported by those funds and focused on the practices of the federally funded BVT (Bilingual Vocational Training) programs (Berry and Feldman 1983; Kirschner Associates 1980; Troike, Golub, and Lugo 1981). The federally funded BVT programs and the studies supported by BVMMT funds served as excellent opportunities for research and development in the relatively new fields of bilingual vocational education (BVE) and vocational English as second language (VESL).

One of the important contributions to come from the federal programs is the development of what is commonly known as the "BVT Model." Based on the experience of the federal programs, the BVT Model is often considered to represent an ideal instructional delivery system for adult LEP vocational students and is currently prescribed as such in the Request for Proposals for federal BVT funding. The BVT Model consists of the following seven components:

1. Recruitment targeted specifically for LEP students (examples: promotional information in the potential trainees' native languages; advertising in the ethnic mass media);

2. Intake and assessment procedures that are both appropriate and diagnostic rather than exclusionary (examples: including testing of vocational interest in the native language, English language proficiency, and native language literacy);

3. Adapted vocational instruction so that students do not have to master English before their vocational instruction (examples: using bilingual instruction and materials and making English more comprehensible);

4. Vocational English as a second language (VESL) instruction that is taught by a trained ESL instructor and focuses specifically on the students' vocational areas (examples: automotive ESL, food services ESL, cosmetology ESL);

5. Counseling and support services that take the special needs of LEP individuals into account (examples: referring students to appropriate agencies, community organizations that can provide immigration counseling and social and health services in the native language; offering bilingual and culturally sensitive personal and professional counseling);

6. Job development and placement geared to the special needs of LEP individuals (examples: foreseeing and counseling for employability problems resulting from cultural differences; preparing employers for LEP and culturally different employees); and

7. Coordination of these six elements so that each supports the other (examples: ensuring that the VESL and vocational instruction are coordinated so that the VESL instructor is teaching the vocabulary and grammar used in the vocational classes). (Friedenberg 1987, p. 2)

In 1986, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education contracted with Development Associates to develop evaluation guidelines to assist the federally funded BVT programs in compiling empirical data about trainees. These guidelines contained forms to record enrollment, retention, job placement, salary, and

follow-up data. OVAE has requested these data from the BVT programs since the development of the guidelines. The potential to quantify the effectiveness of the BVT programs was great; however, no evaluative literature that examined these potentially rich data could be found.

### Serving LEP Adults in "Mainstream" Vocational Education

Friedenberg (1987) conducted one of the first studies that examined regular adult (and secondary school) vocational programs that did not have special federal BVT funding to determine the degree of participation by LEP students and to identify both the problems and the successes these programs had in incorporating the components of the BVT Model. This study examined vocational programs in metropolitan New York, south Florida, Connecticut, southeastern Michigan, coastal Texas, southern California, and north central New Mexico. Two secondary school, two adult, and one industry-based vocational programs were visited in each state, and structured interviews were conducted with administrators, vocational teachers, ESL teachers, counselors, placement specialists, and LEP students in each site. In addition, classroom observations were conducted in the vocational and ESL classes. The findings showed that, although a few outstanding and highly successful attempts were made to accommodate LEP vocational students, for the most part LEP students did not have adequate access to vocational programs and most programs did not accommodate their special needs adequately (which can also be related to inadequate access). Specific findings from this study as they relate to the BVT Model and other related issues are excerpted here.

**For the most part LEP students did not have adequate access to vocational programs and most programs did not accommodate their special needs adequately.**

*Recruitment*

- Comprehensive high schools made fewer attempts to recruit (anyone) than vocational high schools, adult centers, or community colleges.

- Of the vocational programs that did recruit actively for students, many made a special effort to recruit LEP students by translating their promotional materials, using the native language mass media, conducting bilingual open houses, and sending bilingual recruiters to talk directly with potential students.

- Although some recruiting materials exist in Spanish, few were available in other needed languages, such as Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, Haitian Creole, Lao, Korean, etc.

*Intake Assessment*

- Nearly half the schools did not use valid instruments to assess English language proficiency.

- Most vocational programs did not assess vocational interest or basic skills in the native language.

- Most vocational programs did not assess literacy in the native language.

- Most vocational programs used English language proficiency tests as screening, rather than diagnostic tools.

*Vocational Instruction*

- Most vocational programs had at least one bilingual teacher; however bilingual services were insufficient for the numbers of LEP persons present in the communities. In addition, there was insufficient bilingual instruction in languages other than Spanish.

- Although many schools used bilingual teacher aides or paraprofessionals, most programs either underplayed or overplayed the aides' roles. Either aides passed out papers, or they were expected to teach and counsel LEP students.

- Most bilingual aides in vocational programs were paid a minimum wage, received little or no training, and worked part time without benefits. There was a high turnover rate for bilingual aides.

- Vocational teachers who sincerely wanted to help their LEP students used a wide variety of effective and innovative techniques whether or not the teachers could speak another language. These techniques included making the English on tests more comprehensible; getting tests translated; changing written tests and activities to oral tests and activities; encouraging students to bring bilingual dictionaries to class; using

more demonstrations, visual aids, and examples; letting LEP students perform safety skills instead of taking written tests; reviewing frequently the names of tools and equipment; using bilingual peer tutors; getting retired bilingual community volunteers to help students; using bilingual aides to introduce lessons and conduct question and answer sessions in the native language; speaking English more carefully; spending time after hours to tutor LEP students; getting the audio portions of slides and tapes translated; and learning and using a little of the students' native languages to greet and praise them.

*ESL Instruction*

- One-half to one-third of the vocational programs provided no ESL instruction, let alone vocational ESL instruction.
- ESL instruction was more likely to exist at comprehensive high schools and adult centers than at vocational high schools.
- Many schools confused ESL instruction with academic bilingual instruction, English language arts instruction taught in another language, and simplified content area instruction.
- Of the schools that had bona fide ESL instruction, fewer than half provided vocational ESL.

*Staff Development*

- Most ESL teachers had not had any formal training in ESL, let alone VESL.
- Most vocational teachers, counselors, job placement specialists, administrators, or ESL teachers had never had any preservice or inservice training related to LEP vocational students, bilingual vocational education, or vocational ESL.

*Policy, Planning, and Leadership*

- Many vocational programs excluded LEP persons from participating or participating fully in vocational education programs.

- There was a lack of clear policy in most school districts for addressing the needs of LEP vocational students.

- There was often disagreement about and contradiction of policy regarding LEP vocational students within schools, between the school and the district, and between the district and the state.

- The best access and services for LEP vocational students existed when there was a clear and nonexclusionary policy and when there was a full-time, capable person to implement services for LEP vocational students. This was true whether the person worked at the school, district, or state level.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations were made (Friedenberg 1987):

- More advocacy was needed for LEP vocational students. In many cases, civil rights policies needed to be better enforced.

- More national, state, and district-level planning and leadership were needed to develop and implement sound policies and practices for LEP vocational students. These policies and practices should be guided by the BVT Model.

- More personnel were needed, especially at the district level, to implement policies and programs for LEP vocational students.

- High quality inservice training was needed for all counselors, vocational teachers, job placement specialists, administrators, and ESL teachers who work with LEP vocational students. This training should focus on bilingual vocational education, vocational ESL, and the BVT Model.

- All preservice vocational teacher education programs should adapt their courses to include material related to LEP vocational students. Vocational teacher educators should receive appropriate technical assistance in how to adapt their courses to incorporate information about working with LEP students.

In the same year, many of these findings were corroborated by a nationwide study of vocational programs by the Council of Chief

State School Officers (1987), which found that services to LEP students were minimal as were the inservice activities for teachers of LEP students.

Fleischman, Willette, Hanberry, and Hopstock (1988) conducted case studies of vocational education services and policies for LEP adults in Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas as part of a former National Assessment of Vocational Education (NAVE) study. Although the reported findings closely paralleled the Friedenberg findings, it was difficult to know exactly how the findings were derived. The only description of methodology provided in the report was as follows:

> Data were collected from officials and staff at state agencies which administer vocational training programs. In addition, data were collected in a metropolitan area and smaller local jurisdictions in each state in order to extend the examination of programming and policy to the local level. (p. 2)

Fleischman et al. reported in their findings that the provision of vocational services to LEP adults did not seem to be a state-level concern; rather it was thought to be a local issue to be addressed by affected local areas. Since there was no special set-aside in any Perkins funding for LEP persons, local areas had no incentive to identify and serve this population; and fewer than half the Perkins funds were designated for postsecondary-level education. They also reported the following:

- Proficiency in oral English was usually required, along with basic reading, writing, and math skills (presumably in English), to be admitted into a typical vocational program, and LEP persons are usually referred to ESL programs until their English skills meet the entry criteria;

- The only programs that offered both the specialized language and employment skills training needed by LEP adults were those available through specially funded programs or community agencies that had a special interest in serving a particular population;

- The most frequent service available to LEP adults was ESL instruction;

- JTPA programs rarely targeted the adult LEP population;
- Community colleges were not particularly interested in providing specialized services for LEP adults;
- There were inadequate data concerning the size of adult LEP populations;
- It was difficult to find bilingual instructors who were qualified to provide vocational instruction;
- There is a lack of advocacy for LEP adults; and
- There was little coordination or articulation at the state level for LEP adults.

Again, it was difficult to ascertain the exact sources or methods used to derive these findings. For example, were the findings related to state agencies based on reviewing state plans or interviewing state officials? Were the state-related findings true for all six states? Were the findings related to vocational services based on interviews with LEP adults, interviews with personnel, or on written records? Was any attempt made to quantify these results? If the data were based on interviews, there was no way to know how many persons were interviewed, what kind of persons were interviewed, or what they were asked.

In a related report, also prepared for a former NAVE study, Fleischman and Willette (1988) apparently combined their case study findings with a "review of the literature" and offered ***Models of Training for LEP Adults***. In describing the methodology for this study the authors stated:

> In developing this framework, the literature on vocational services for LEP adults was reviewed, and information on service provision was collected from officials and staff at state and local agencies which administer vocational programs. (p. 14)

Unfortunately, not only was the case study methodology description also missing from this report, but despite the fact that the authors reported that a literature review contributed to their findings, not one reference appeared anywhere in this study. It was virtually impossible to know which of their findings were

the result of primary data collection and which came from existing literature.

The studies by Friedenberg and Fleischman et al. suggest that LEP adults do not have access to the full range of vocational education programs and that they are being excluded because of their limited English proficiency and referred to ESL programs. One doctoral study (Woodruff 1991) examined Illinois' efforts to serve Hispanic youth and adults in programs and services supported by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act. He found that, although Hispanics enrolled in vocational education at higher rates than other groups, LEP Hispanics were seriously underrepresented in vocational education programs. These practices seem to be widespread and may be in direct violation of civil rights legislation in that individuals are being denied access to vocational education based solely on limited English proficiency (i.e., national origin). In addition, the lack of articulation at the state level on behalf of LEP persons can perhaps be traced, at least in part, to the lack of leadership at the federal level in that no specific guidelines have ever been provided by the Perkins legislation for articulation on behalf of LEP persons as they are for disadvantaged persons and persons with disabilities and to the vocational special needs field, in general, which has neglected the LEP population in its literature.

A third case study, by Ramsey and Robyn (1992), compared the availability of education and training services to the adult immigrant population in California and Florida. The investigators conducted interviews with educational policy makers and practitioners (including administrators, counselors, and teachers), community leaders, and others; surveyed nearly 600 adult immigrants in the system; and held focus groups with students in 5 of the 12 sites visited in each state.

Interestingly, three discussions in Ramsey and Robyn's report suggest that LEP adults were excluded from participating in vocational education; however, they did not report it as a finding. First, when discussing the approach used in the student survey, they report that despite the fact that questionnaires were available in several languages, "vocational students routinely used the English version of the questionnaire" (p. 10). Apparently, none of these vocational students was LEP or they could not have responded to a survey written in English. Second, when discussing language training and vocational education in

the adult school system, they found, "VESL courses have the advantage of moving adult immigrants more quickly into job-related English skills. . . . Students move from ESL to vocational classes as soon as they have a minimum vocabulary" (p. 33). Third, when discussing course prerequisites and requirements, they state, "Those with poor English skills usually need about six months of ESL before entering the regular program" (p. 39). (Ramsey and Robyn do point out an interesting contradiction in language policy in the state of Florida in that, although state licensing agencies allow some licensing exams to be taken in Spanish, another branch of the state requires vocational students to pass an English language and math test before they can receive their vocational certificates.) Although the Fleischman et al. studies focused on the delay or denial of vocational services based on limited English proficiency, neither Fleischman et al. nor Ramsey and Robyn discussed the legal implications nor the apparent lack of enforcement of civil rights legislation.

Moving away from the access issue, Ramsey and Robyn found that services available to LEP adults generally amounted to modest attempts to modify traditional programs by including some ESL instruction and that there were some critical differences between services available in Florida and California. They found, for example, that the community college system in Florida had three main goals: preparing transfer students for four-year colleges, offering two-year vocational programs, and serving the surrounding community through noncredit adult classes. In contrast, the California community college system includes only the first two among their goals. In addition, in California, the state's reimbursement is at only 50 percent for noncredit courses, so, naturally, fewer noncredit ESL courses are available in the community college system in California, compared with Florida. One of the things that the Ramsey and Robyn study prided itself on was that it was one of few to collect data from the students. Ramsey and Robyn report that the nearly 600 students who participated in the study had similar recommendations about enhancing their programs. These recommendations included more flexible class times, more language (presumably English) practice, more integration of ESL instruction to specific job needs, and provision of bilingual support. Despite these recommendations by students, Ramsey and Robyn provide a separate section to discuss each of the

students' recommendations, except the bilingual support, and conclude that "the unique factor in providing education to immigrants is the need to include English instruction. English is the gateway to further instruction, to most job training, and to future job mobility" (p. 51). "Federal programs, such as JTPA [Job Training Partnership Act] and JOBS [Job Opportunities and Basic Skills], constitute a large portion of short-term job training; yet federal job training programs do not accommodate the immigrant situation because of language proficiency requirements and different targeting priorities. Whenever there are shortages of ESL classes, this Catch-22 is difficult solve" (p. 54). This apparent bias against bilingual support is also seen in Platt et al. (1992), as well as in JTPA programs.

An unfortunate limitation of the Ramsey and Robyn study, which they acknowledge (p. 13), is that they made no attempt to confirm their interview and survey data with structured observations. Consequently, what a program or institution may refer to as ESL or VESL instruction may be something completely different. Indeed, Friedenberg (1987) found that much of what was referred to as ESL amounted to bilingual language arts instruction, prevocational ESL, watered-down content instruction, and so forth. Finally, it was never clear why Ramsey and Robyn chose to limit their study to immigrants, excluding non-immigrant LEP adults, or how they determined which of the 600 participants were actually immigrants. Over one-third of LEP persons are nonimmigrants (Willette et al. 1988).

Chisman, Wrigley, and Ewen (1993) conducted an extensive examination of the availability and quality of ESL services for adults throughout the United States and found that, despite the fact that most LEP adults want to learn English, adult ESL across the nation serves only about 1.8 million adults per year, leaving most to linger on long waiting lists. In addition to low availability or quantity of ESL services, Chisman et al. also document problems with quality: services do a better job of helping recent immigrants with very basic survival English than with helping them progress to the point of being able to take full advantage of economic and social opportunities. They conclude that adult ESL in the United States is poorly coordinated, poorly attuned to students' needs, poorly supported, and a neglected, low status activity that needs strong leadership and support at all levels.

Platt et al. (1992) conducted case studies of secondary and adult vocational programs in five states (New York, California, Texas, Massachusetts, and Minnesota) and focused on intra-school collaboration between ESL and vocational instructors on behalf of LEP students in mainstream vocational classrooms. They identified two distinct roles for the ESL teacher, the support role (teaching the language related to the vocational classroom) and the expert role (teaching the vocational teacher about language and culture and how to teach technical language). "The presence of a VESL support person appeared to have little impact on vocational instruction," but, "when ESL specialists shared their expertise with vocational teachers, the resulting impact on instruction was considerable" (p. vii). Since the data were not quantified in any way, there was no way to evaluate such findings as "had little impact on vocational instruction" or "impact on instruction was considerable." Based on this finding, Platt et al. made the following recommendations—

> When vocational teachers improve skills through staff development, they need less VESL support and collaborative activity. Thus, VESL teachers can concentrate on other areas of vocational language development. The following are specific suggestions for both kinds of teachers:
>
> Vocational teachers can learn ways of enhancing comprehension and eliciting oral language use from students by providing opportunities for students to—
>
> - develop vocabulary through use of flashcards, illustrations, and labels;
> - describe objects and materials;
> - explain processes, procedures, and functions;
> - give and receive directions;
> - ask and answer questions;
> - troubleshoot problems encountered in the work; and

- participate in the discourse of the vocational classroom. (p. viii)

ESL teachers who support various vocational programs despite a lack of content knowledge can nonetheless provide valuable language teaching when they—

- help make comprehensible the vocational classroom language using video or audiotaped portions of class lectures to locate sources of difficulty;

- practice vocabulary by having students explain concepts, functions, or procedures, not simply recite words and definitions;

- work with students in the vocational classroom if appropriate and conducive to learning;

- help students locate and comprehend information from printed materials or visual displays; and

- assign writing tasks similar to those required in the occupation for which the student is being trained. (p. ix)

Throughout her report, Platt repeats her concern that VESL teachers lack the technical expertise to teach the language of a vocational class adequately. She supports this concern with a description of a VESL class in which the VESL teacher mistakes a nut for a bolt. Although a valid concern, it seemed to be based on one isolated incident and seemed to be insufficient to render a conclusion that ESL teachers should not attempt to teach technical vocabulary. Platt identified several examples of both effective and flawed ESL instruction by ESL teachers, so her conclusion that ESL teachers should be used mainly to train vocational instructors seems somewhat unsubstantiated. Further, her recommendations, cited here, seem to list practices for the vocational teacher that reflect nothing more than good vocational instruction, and her suggestions to ESL teachers actually strengthen their supportive role. One would have to conclude, then, that Platt is really recommending that ESL teachers play both expert and supportive roles, a conclusion that seems appropriate.

## Serving LEP Adults in Special Programs

In theory, several specialized programs should be available to meet both the language and employment training needs of LEP adults and out-of-school youth in public institutions. These programs have been legislated through refugee assistance, JTPA, BVT, amnesty, and other programs. Unfortunately, a number of factors have made many of these efforts less effective than they could be. Figure 1 provides an overview of several of the federally funded programs that have served LEP adults.

| Program | Major Targeted Population | Services |
|---|---|---|
| ABE (Adult Basic Education) | Adults | GED, ESL, literacy, math |
| Amnesty | Undocumented LEPs | ESL, citizenship classes |
| BVT (Bilingual Vocational Training) | Adult LEP | Bilingual job training, VESL, job placement |
| JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act) | Disadvantaged adults | Job training, some basic skills |
| Refugee | Refugees | V/ESL, job placement, some job training |
| WPL (Workplace Literacy) | Illiterate English speakers, LEPs | Literacy, V/ESL |
| Title VII | LEP children, adults, teachers | Bilingual instruction, ESL, teacher training |

**Figure 1. Overview of federally funded efforts affecting LEP adults**

### *Refugee Programs*

Mason (1987) examined the impact of federal resettlement policy on the effectiveness of refugee employment training programs on refugees in general and specifically on refugee women. She states that between 1975 and 1985 a broad network of programs

was established throughout the nation to help refugees integrate into U.S. society and the labor force. These programs included English language training and employment training. In 1982, the ***Southeast Asian Refugee Self-sufficiency Study*** (Caplan et al. 1985) was completed and submitted to the Office of Refugee Resettlement. According to Mason (1987), data from this study showed that, in 1982, refugees who had vocational training were more likely to be employed and tended to have more stabile jobs with better pay and that the most significant factor in household self-sufficiency was the addition of a second wage earner. Despite these findings and their availability in 1982, the federal administration changed the direction the refugee assistance would take to focus more on immediate job placement. In doing this, vocational training became unavailable to refugees and ESL instruction would be available only on a part-time basis in the evenings. In essence, the new policy was to train refugees for the secondary (unskilled/low skilled) labor market to get them off of public assistance as quickly as possible.

Mason (1987) sent questionnaires to refugee programs in every state with a refugee population of more than 200 and followed up with concentrated studies in 9 additional sites. The questionnaires were to generate very general data on employment training programs. The concentrated studies allowed for the observation of actual programs, as well as interviews with state resettlement administrators, teachers, and refugees. Mason collected data on past and current programs in order to correlate programs and their outcomes with policies. She concluded that the federal government's policy to train large numbers of refugees for the secondary labor market (in order to get them off of public assistance) failed to accomplish its goals because the secondary market is characterized by frequent layoffs and low pay, making it impossible for refugees to become independent of public assistance. In addition, Mason also found that few employment training opportunities were available to refugee women and those who were offered training were trained in the lowest skilled and lowest paying jobs, such as industrial sewing and housekeeping. Ironically, Mason also found that despite the inadequate kinds of training provided to refugee women the training, nevertheless, "played a significant role in helping refugee women adapt to their new environment and provided a supportive atmosphere in which they developed a degree of self-confidence" (p. 7).

As a result of the political controversy surrounding the use of refugee funds, several new refugee initiatives emerged during the mid-1980s. The first of these initiatives were the Targeted Assistance Programs (TAP), which were to "provide English language instruction, employment training, and employment services to promote self-sufficiency in impacted counties" (Mason 1987). Despite the political controversy occurring at the time, TAP provided many refugees, especially women, with their first opportunity for employment training. Forty-four counties in 22 states received TAP grants (ibid.), which were to be distributed in three cycles. TAP 1 provided employment training to an estimated 32,000 refugees. The four types of programs most offered were vocational training, on-the-job training, employment services, and vocational ESL instruction, in that order (Mason 1987).

The Highland Lao Initiative (HLI) was developed as a result of increased concern over the low skills and serious assimilation problems among the hill-tribe refugees from the highlands of Laos. After an initial allocation of funds to communities in urgent need of medical care, English and employment training, low-cost day care, and farming projects, nearly $3 million was awarded on a competitive grant basis for 48 one-year projects in 24 states (Mason 1987). Mason reports that, although men's training included welding, carpentry, building maintenance, tractor driving, automotive mechanics, farming, and business management, women's training generally included only industrial sewing, marketing of crafts, and hotel cleaning. Mason also describes a particularly innovative program for women that was supported by HLI funds in Wisconsin. The "Pa Ndau" Development Program included short-term training by a crafts consultant in five cities. Hmong women received training in small business management, taxes, bookkeeping, pricing, and marketing. They also participated in workshops on leadership development for women. The Pa Ndau Development Program culminated with two successful women's conferences. (Pa ndau is the Hmong term for traditional women's needlework.)

The Refugee Health Professional/Paraprofessional Retraining Project (RHPRP) was one of the few federally funded programs to train refugees for the primary labor market. The RHPRP responded to the simultaneous needs for bilingual bicultural

health care workers for refugees and for a way for refugees with previous health care training to obtain the needed credentials to practice in the United States. In most of the programs, theoretical training took place in community colleges or technical institutes, while clinical training took place in cooperating health care facilities. Although the attrition rates for the refugee LPN programs ranged from 30 to 57 percent, the attrition rates for mainstream (nonrefugee) LPN programs ranged from 40 to 50 percent (Mason 1987).

The Secondary Wage Earners Project was initiated in 1984 to provide skills training and job placement to previously underserved groups, such as women, youth, and older men. The purpose was to increase the number of wage earners per household to reduce refugee dependence on public assistance. The Enhanced Skills Training Project was initiated in 1985 to assist refugees with extensive long-term dependence on public assistance who had few marketable skills. No recent information on the outcomes of these initiatives was available.

*JTPA Programs*

In 1986 the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development, U.S. Employment and Training Administration, prepared a special report for the Assistant Secretary of Labor on the use of native languages in JTPA programs. The author (unidentified) examined 15 service delivery areas (SDAs) representing almost two-thirds of the LEP persons enrolled in JTPA programs. Based on interviews and observations, the author of the study reported the following:

- No JTPA-funded remedial training was conducted mainly in a native language (although the native language was used informally at times for clarification purposes, if the instructor happened to be bilingual).

- English was used extensively in remedial training (contractors were held accountable and rewarded for improving the English language proficiency of enrollees to a point where they could enter unsubsidized employment or qualify for JTPA skill training).

- Most contractors required enrollees to have a minimum level of English proficiency prior to admission to training (and several used standardized tests of English).

- JTPA-sponsored skills training courses were taught primarily in English (although some instructors found reinforcement in the native language useful).

- Some native language classroom training was being funded by sources outside of JTPA.

- Most JTPA-sponsored on-the-job training (OJT) was conducted in English (although a few SDAs indicated that OJT was the one program area where some training occurred in the native language).

In sum, this report demonstrated that "the JTPA system basically supports the use of English for remedial and classroom skill training" and that "no evidence was found of native languages being used to train LES enrollees in either of these program components" (p. 9). The defensive tone of the report might lead one to suspect that the use of instruction in the native language was something that an SDA might have to apologize for or hide. It is unfortunate that the study did not focus instead on a more critical issue such as how many LEP adults were being served by JTPA programs and how effective the training had been. This study did make it quite clear, however, that standardized instruments of English proficiency were being used in JTPA programs to exclude LEP persons from participating, rather than to diagnose their needs and provide appropriate support services and that that is the policy the Department of Labor apparently wishes to support. The Business Council for Effective Literacy (1987) agreed with this finding when they stated that JTPA programs serve about 22,000 LEP persons per year, but unfortunately, LEP persons are "not a designated target group and, in general, the low skills level of these people makes it difficult for programs to enroll them and still meet JTPA mandated placement requirements" (p. 4).

Romero (1988) identified a need in JTPA programs for more specialized training for LEP persons, whom he considers to be

"hard to serve" by virtue of their limited English skills and lack of job skills. He compared the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) with JTPA and found that neither program paid much attention to ESL training; 5 percent of CETA's participants were LEP whereas only 3 percent of JTPA's participants are (despite the fact that there is currently a much higher percentage of LEP persons living in the United States). CETA at least identified LEP persons as warranting additional assistance through special programs and offered programs that combined English language instruction with vocational instruction and even offered transitional bilingual vocational instruction. Romero recommends that JTPA programs allow longer training periods for LEP participants, integrate ESL and vocational skills training, offer bilingual vocational instruction but with as much emphasis on English as possible, and use technology such as computers and videodiscs to support English language instruction.

*Other Public Programs*

Other programs that serve LEP adults are adult basic education (ABE) programs, which provide general and survival ESL to approximately 850,000 LEP adults annually (BCEL 1987); migrant education programs, which provide very limited ESL instruction to migrant workers; and penal institutions, which receive some funding from corrections education, the Carl Perkins Act, and ABE and provide very limited basic skills instruction. Voluntary organizations also provide some services to LEP adults. For example, Literacy Volunteers of America provides English literacy instruction to about 6,000 LEP adults per year (representing about 30 percent of their total enrollment) and Laubach Literacy provides services to 24,000 LEP adults annually (representing 36 percent of their enrollment) (BCEL 1987). Although library literacy programs focus on English speakers, BCEL (1987) notes that funds from Title VI of the Library Services and Construction Act could be used to strengthen services in ESL.

An interesting and little-known program for LEP adults is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State for refugees waiting to enter the United States. The largest of these programs is in the

Philippines and Thailand for Southeast Asian refugees. This program provides 500 hours of ESL, cultural orientation, and prevocational skills instruction over 20 weeks to refugee adults who plan to emigrate to the United States. Recently, in addition, programs for Southeast Asian high school and elementary school children were established. Other smaller programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of State are located in Italy, Austria, and Germany for Eastern European refugees and in Botswana for refugees from Africa (BCEL 1987). It is important to note that, although the refugee programs in the Philippines and Thailand are considered to be extremely effective for preparing refugees to live in this country, their availability has been very limited and most Southeast Asian refugees in the United States were not so fortunate to have had access to them.

**Despite the fact that it appears that LEP adults can receive services from many potential service providers, there are insufficient English language and vocational services to meet the needs of such a huge adult LEP population.**

None of these other programs provides vocational instruction to LEP adults. Despite the fact that it appears that LEP adults can receive services from many potential service providers, there are insufficient English language and vocational services to meet the needs of such a huge adult LEP population. Several authors have noted that ESL classes are overfilled and that tens of thousands of LEP adults have been turned away. The BCEL (1987) noted that approximately 40,000 LEP adults in Los Angeles are on waiting lists for ESL instruction, 6,000 are on waiting lists in New York, and most other cities have no waiting lists. The BCEL observed that, "ironically, English-Only laws in California and elsewhere have not included provision for funding English language instruction. Nationwide, the need for ESL instruction exceeds the demand" (p. 1). Needless to say, vocational instruction for LEP adults is even less available. Willette and Haub (1988) attempted to estimate and project the number of LEP adults who would need employment training in the year 2000 by using census data to determine the number of LEP persons in the year 2000 who would be living below the poverty level. They projected that about 8 million LEP persons between the age of 16 and 64 would require employment training by the year 2000. Unfortunately, this study fell short of including a complete analysis of the projected job market in 2000 and how that job market relates to the need for vocational training in particular.

The best source of both vocational and English language training available to LEP adults may very well be the federally funded BVT programs, as evidenced by only some of the program evaluation reports. Unfortunately, not only has little been written about these programs in the last 10 years, but given its small appropriation, only about 10 such programs have been funded annually and currently this program is earmarked for total elimination.

## *Programs and Services in Private Institutions*

Private institutions that could serve LEP adults and out-of-school youth include business and industry, community-based organizations, and proprietary (private vocational) schools. Since private institutions often like to maintain a certain degree of discretion about their policies and activities, there is less information available about them and especially about how they deal with populations whom they might consider to be controversial. Nevertheless, the literature does provide some useful information about whether and how such institutions employ or serve LEP persons.

### Programs in Business and Industry

As in public institutions, business and industry programs need to address both the English language needs of LEP workers, as well as their needs for effective technical skills training. Indeed, the Business Council for Effective Literacy (1987) reported, "Lack of adequate training in job techniques as well as the English language may pose problems for employers" (p. 4). BCEL indicates that immigrant workers are already used heavily in the health, food, and other service industries. Training programs in business and industry that serve the special needs of LEP employees may range from modest company-sponsored adaptations to the company's regular training programs, to large-scale specially funded efforts in collaboration with other, usually public, institutions. During the early and mid-1980s federal funds typically used to support special training programs for LEP employees (who were classified as refugees) came from refugee assistance funds. More recently, federal workplace

literacy funds have often been used to meet some of the basic skills needs of LEP employees. Companies that are experimenting with ESL programs on their own include AEtna Life and Casualty, Polaroid, and the Southland Corporation, which is pilot-testing ESL classes in their 7-Eleven stores in selected locations (BCEL 1987).

Chisman (1992) identified three types of workplace education programs: (1) low intensity programs, which are characterized as simple, common, long-term programs that serve only a few workers and typically involve in-house tutoring in remedial reading or ESL; (2) quick fix programs, which are characterized as moderately complex, short-term programs that serve large numbers of employees and address a specific problem; and (3) lifelong learning, which is characterized as highly complex, rare, of long duration, and involving large numbers of employees. In his survey of small businesses, Chisman found that most companies provide employees with paid release time to participate in workplace education activities, that most activities are heavily subsidized by the public sector, and that few such activities were actually evaluated formally by employers. With regard to LEP employees, Chisman found that, although ESL makes up a large part of workplace education in certain areas of the country, nationwide, it is offered less frequently than math and remedial reading and writing. In addition, although some companies hire bilingual supervisors, more and more companies are feeling that it is important for employees to be able to communicate with co-workers and customers in English. Interestingly, no specific technical training (with in English or bilingually) was included in Chisman's examples of workplace education.

Similarly, Bassi (1992) surveyed 72 firms with 50-500 employees and found that most companies provide some paid release time and financial support toward the effort; most companies hold classes at the worksite with an in-house teacher; and the skills most likely taught are problem solving, interpersonal skills, math, reading and writing, ESL, and GED. Again, technical skills training was not mentioned.

Thomas and Rhodes (1990) and Cichon, Grover, and Thomas (1990) published reports on industry-based bilingual vocational

training that were funded by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. The objectives of the first report, ***Industry-based Bilingual Vocational Training: A Directory of Industry-Based Training Programs for LEP Adults***, were to provide readers with a sense of the types of industry-based training programs there were for LEP employees, to identify potential demonstration programs, and to provide a list of programs. The overall goal was to promote the implementation of bilingual vocational training in the private sector. Interestingly, when attempting to create a list of potential companies to contact for their survey, the authors contacted state departments of labor and JTPA offices in the 20 states with the highest numbers of LEP individuals. Not surprisingly, these state-level offices were unaware of any specialized industry-based programs for LEP persons. When surveying companies for inclusion in the directory, they also found that most companies separated technical skills training from basic skills training and that LEP employees were not, for the most part, receiving any specialized technical skills training, only specialized basic skills training (i.e., ESL?). This finding would lead one to question how the authors could purport to assemble a directory of industry-based bilingual vocational training when none of the companies provided bilingual skills training, an essential component of BVT. Moreover, even though the authors' expressed goal was to promote bilingual vocational training (BVT) in the private sector, nowhere did the authors define or describe what BVT actually was.

Based on their survey of companies in 20 states, Thomas and Rhodes presented the following findings:

- Approximately 50 percent of any specialized programs for LEP employees are in existence because of temporary special funding;

- Most programs were the result of a partnership with an educational provider, such as public ABE centers, community colleges, college or university ESL programs, or community-based organizations;

- Occasionally, companies had partnerships with unions, school districts, state departments of education, or private educational agencies.

- Examples of the most common types of jobs held by LEP employees in their survey (in order) are factory assembly/ production workers, housekeepers/domestics, restaurant service workers, electronics/software workers, food/ beverage/meat processor workers, maintenance workers, custodians, textile workers, hospital workers, drivers, and laundry workers.

- The most common types of training offered to LEP employees were general ESL, workplace ESL, and workplace literacy, adult basic education.

- Only 2 of the 94 programs that had special services for LEP employees had any kind of BVT.

- Both companies and educational providers lack information and awareness of programs for LEP workers.

The second report, by Cichon, Grover, and Thomas, was a literature review that addressed workplace literacy in general, job-related language needs of LEP employees, cross-cultural communication in the workplace, training program models for LEP adults, public and private partnerships, and economic benefits to industry of having workers competent in basic skills. Findings related to job-related language needs of LEP employees are summarized as follows:

- Even entry-level jobs (including manufacturing, industrial sewing, building maintenance, machine operations, and retail sales) require contact with English speakers.

- Entry or advancement into higher-level jobs requires higher-level English language skills.

- Literacy is typically thought of as including only reading and writing, but for LEP persons, it also includes comprehension and speaking English.

- Even if workers can listen and follow orders, they still need to know how to ask questions and report problems appropriately.

- Employers report that Southeast Asian employees are more dependable and have a stronger work ethic than average employees.

- The work-related language needs of LEP employees include both general communication skills, as well as job-specific language.

- U.S. workers and supervisors often mistakenly evaluate or interpret an LEP employee's abilities or competence in the workplace based on English language ability.

These findings were supported by Gembert and Semons (1987) who, based on interviews with employers, identified four critical areas in which refugees needed to develop work-related English language skills: job-specific vocabulary, following and asking directions, safety, and general communication with co-workers and by the BCEL (1987) who found that "the inability of Indo-chinese employees to understand instructions and procedures often led to costly mistakes or injuries" (p. 5). Lafrenz's (1991) interviews of employers in the hospitality industry who hired large numbers of LEP employees showed that most employers felt that the best way to enhance LEP employees' job performance was to establish on-site English language classes.

When discussing model training programs for LEP adults, Cichon et al. noted that the only training models in the literature dealt with employees in general and not LEP employees. When evaluating Phase III of the Targeted Assistance Programs, Gembert and Semons (1987) found that TAP-sponsored on-the-job training resulted in many promotions for refugees in the machine tool industry. They also found a high degree of success when refugees were given job coaches during the initial stages of their employment and bilingual support during on-the-job training. (The use of job coaches is discussed a good deal more in the vocational special education and transition literature.) Employers in Lafrenz's study felt that, although the most frequent action taken to enhance LEP employee job performance in hospitality jobs was to provide them with bilingual support and keep them in low-guest-contact situations, these actions also contributed to the perpetuation of their lack of English skills. Cichon et al. (1990) found that the availability of special OJT

for LEP workers was minimal and they provided an interesting discussion relating the BVT Model to a business and industry setting. They argue that, although two components of the model (bilingual skills training and job-related ESL) could be adapted easily to a business and industry setting, the other five components might not be needed as they are in an educational setting. For example, they argued that recruitment would be necessary only if the industry-based training was voluntary. Lafrenz (1991) found that recruitment was a concern among employers in hospitality industries that hired large numbers of LEP employees when addressing their need for additional employees. Interestingly, assessment was discussed only in terms of an employer wanting to screen potential candidates for training and the possibly exclusionary use of it; however, assessment could and should also be used to diagnose employees' training needs. Counseling and support services are described as needs in the workplace perhaps only for potential employees (assuming that current employees have already solved their child-care and transportation problems); however, many companies offer counseling services even for non-LEP employees to address personnel as well as personal problems. There is no reason why such services would not be needed and could not be adapted for LEP employees. Although Cichon et al. reasonably suggest that the job development/placement component would not be necessary unless workers were being retrained due to a layoff situation. This component could be adapted to address potential opportunities for advancement.

**Community-based Organizations**

Community-based organizations (CBOs) provide a variety of services for LEP adults, depending mostly on their funding sources and the needs of their client communities. BCEL (1987) acknowledges the critical role that CBOs can play in serving the needs of LEP adults when they stated that CBOs are, "uniquely positioned to attract the neediest students who would not seek help elsewhere, and because they are so strongly oriented to individual and community needs they have a substantially lower dropout rate than other kinds of programs" (p. 4). Similarly, when providing testimony on the Adult Literacy and Employability Act of 1989, the National Council of La Raza

(NCLR) stated, "The most effective literacy programs for Hispanic adults are typically community-based. Many Hispanic community-based organizations have been serving Hispanic adults and out-of-school youth since the early 1900s" (de la Rosa and Maw 1990, p. 7). Currently, NCLR is implementing a CBO-based demonstration program, Project EXCEL (Excellence in Community Educational Leadership), in 10 sites around the United States to increase English literacy skills of Hispanic adults.

U.S. cities have many effective CBOs reaching out to their client ethnic communities, such as the New York Association for New Americans (NYANA) which provides Russian Jewish and other Eastern European refugees with vocational and ESL training; the Haitian American Community Association of Dade (HACAD), which provides social services to the Haitian community in Miami; the Career Resources Development Center (CRDC), which serves the Asian community in San Francisco; and the CBOs in Southeastern Michigan, which provide Arab-American and Chaldean adults with ESL and employability skills training. The unique ability of CBOs to identify the needs of and reach their client communities was evidenced by the uniquely collaborative Connections Program of Catholic Charities in Richmond, Virginia. It was recognized that, although CBOs provided superior outreach services, they often lacked the facilities and equipment to provide comprehensive vocational instruction. The Connections Program provided bilingual vocational education in over 10 occupational areas to 50 Southeast Asian refugee out-of-school youth (ages 16-21), as well as V/ESL, employability skills, and independent living skills instruction. The CBO provided the project administration, recruiting, assessment, bilingual support (for the vocational instruction), employability skills and independent living skills instruction. Three collaborating school districts provided the instructors, facilities, and equipment for the vocational and V/ESL instruction. Fifty-two students were served during the first year of operation; only three students dropped out, an enviable retention rate that few public schools could achieve alone. Indeed, Connections project staff acknowledge that, most likely, more than half of these students would not have completed the program had it not been for the special support services provided by the CBO (Bateman 1989).

Another CBO, Chinatown Manpower Project, Inc. (CMP) in New York City, has federal refugee, BVT, JTPA, workplace literacy, as well as private foundational funds to serve local Chinese (and some Southeast Asian) adults in the Chinatown area of New York. The workplace literacy program at CMP trains Chinese workers in the garment industry to improve their oral and written English skills. Classes are held on the weekends and the program also provides brief ESL classes on the radio for workers to listen to while they are at work during the week.

CMP's BVT program has enjoyed a 90+ percent job placement for about 15 years. The program provides bilingual word processing and Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN), as well as bilingual chef training classes, vocational ESL, and bilingual job counseling and placement. CMP probably enjoys a larger variety of external financial support than most CBOs, which explains why it is in the unique position of having the facilities and equipment to provide on-site vocational training in two occupational areas. Typically, CBOs obtain support to provide basic skills training and social services to their LEP clients; however, rarely do they have the facilities to offer the kinds of technical skills training that CMP can offer. Again, the benefits of CBOs over public institutions are that they frequently exist solely to serve a particular local ethnic or language community and their outreach services are, understandably, superior. In the case of CMP, formal recruiting for their programs is usually unnecessary because word-of-mouth has kept them at the center of the Chinese community. In addition, their extensive contacts with business and industry include local Chinese businesses, as well as Chinese personnel in mainstream businesses, allowing for highly successful job placement, as well.

**Proprietary Schools**

Little information was available on how and whether proprietary schools (private vocational schools) serve LEP adults. Recently, proprietary schools have been the focus of controversy with many high-profile investigations by the mass media and accusations that they misused financial aid funding and did not deliver to their student clients what they promised. Carter (1988) states, "The enrollment of foreign-speaking students in office technology courses at proprietary schools has increased at such a

rapid rate, foreign-speaking students will soon be in the majority" (p. 1). Carter conducted a cost-benefit analysis of whether it would be feasible for proprietary schools to adapt office reading materials for "foreign-speaking" students. She noted that all entering students were expected to have an eighth-grade proficiency in English reading upon entering a proprietary school, and that many students did not, but were, nevertheless, admitted. Carter concluded that it was feasible to adapt materials for "foreign-speaking" students. It was difficult to determine from her unusual use of terminology whether the students in question were U.S. residents or citizens with limited English proficiency or whether they were visiting foreign visa students. Her conclusion that, "since foreign-speaking students require 40 percent more time to complete the office technology course, any increase in course completion time will lessen the chance of students' losing federal funding due to hours behind schedule" (p. 8) suggests that the students are LEP adults from the United States.

# Linking Needs to Vocational Development

Interestingly, there is a fairly well-developed literature related to the effectiveness of various models and strategies for delivering content area instruction to LEP children and youth. For some reason, little of this development has found its way into the literature or practices related to adults. Admittedly, bilingual education is still finding controversy in this country, although more of the criticism seems to be based on "politics" and less on the research (Cummins 1989).

## *Theoretical Bases for Various Instructional Delivery Systems*

Cummins (1989) addresses the controversy over bilingual education extensively. He poses several principles for educating language minority persons, which he calls the *Contextual Interaction Theory*. One of these principles is called *Common Underlying Proficiency*. Cummins uses the metaphor of a dual iceberg and theorizes that if LEP individuals have well-developed proficiency in their native languages, they will acquire a second language more rapidly, which will lead to more academic success as well. This theory is supported by a study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, discussed in Cummins (1989), in which three groups of LEP children were tracked for 5 years. One group was totally immersed in English, the second had bilingual instruction for a short period of time, and the third had bilingual instruction for a long period of time. After 5 years, the immersion group had both the lowest academic and English attainment, followed by the second group, and finally, by the last group. That is, the group that had the most and longest content instruction (i.e., academic classes, such as language arts, math, social studies, and science) in their native language ended up learning not only the most content instruction but also the most English.

**The group that had the most and longest content instruction in their native language ended up learning not only the most content instruction but also the most English.**

## *Instructional Delivery Systems for LEP Persons*

Although the research may show that bilingual education is the most effective instructional delivery system for LEP children, such services are less available to adults. Gillespie (1994), for example, examined native language literacy instruction for LEP adults throughout the United States and found that adult ESL students who are not literate in their native language have high rates of dropout from adult ESL programs. As with children, there can be many benefits to allowing LEP adults to acquire literacy in their primary language, including expediting literacy acquisition in English, being able to take advantage of content (e.g., vocational) materials written in the native language, and feeling more accepted by the school and community through the affirmation that their native language is accepted (Gillespie 1994; Rivera 1990; Spener 1994; Wrigley and Guth 1992). Nevertheless, Gillespie notes that there is little public support for such instruction, especially at the federal and state levels. Although no law in the United States requires a program to provide bilingual instruction, programs that do not have sound practices and appropriate resources for serving LEP students risk lawsuits by advocacy groups, at the very least (Castaneda v. Pickard 1981,1986; Keyes v. School District No. 1, Denver 1983; Gomez v. Illinois State Board of Education 1987).

There are basically three common types of systems for delivering content instruction to LEP persons. These include bilingual/bicultural education, "sheltered" instruction, and multilingual/multicultural approaches. Sometimes, "ESL" is erroneously treated as an instructional delivery system, although its goal is not to teach content instruction, but to support it. The use of "submersion" or the "sink or swim" approach in the literature simply refers to no special services at all for LEP students. Immersion is also an approach found frequently in the literature. However, its use is inconsistent and can range from carefully structured sheltered techniques with bilingual assistance to nothing more than submersion.

### Bilingual Education

Bilingual education presents content area instruction to LEP students in their native language while also teaching them ESL

and building their self-concepts through cross-cultural awareness. Over time, the teacher decreases the instructional time in their native language while increasing the use of English as the medium of instruction. Strong bilingual programs have bilingual teachers who are properly trained in bilingual education, as well as in the areas of language acquisition, sociolinguistics, culture, and multicultural education. When that is not possible, an appropriately trained bilingual aide is utilized. Bilingual education is probably most practical when all the LEP students in a class have the same native language. Nevertheless, vocational programs should avoid "counseling" LEP students with the same language backgrounds into a particular program (e.g., auto body) just to create a situation in which it is more practical to offer bilingual education. In such a situation, it would be preferable to use bilingual personnel to offer multilingual instruction across several vocational areas. An exception can be made for special programs that are funded to provide a specific kind of job training to a specific language group, based on a careful needs analysis of the local labor market, such as the federal BVT programs.

**"Sheltered" Content Instruction**

"Sheltered" or specially designed academic instruction was originally intended for LEP students who have an intermediate level of English proficiency. However, in many places, especially on the West Coast, it has become the preferred method of delivering content instruction when there are multiple language groups present in a class, when there are multiple levels of English proficiency or when bilingual personnel are simply unavailable. Sheltered instruction presents content instruction by first developing vocabulary through the extensive use of visual aids. In presenting content, it continues to make use of visuals and adds body movements, hands-on activities, specially adapted speech, graphic organizers, and cooperative learning. The medium of instruction is English, although this approach allows for bilingual peer tutoring. Figure 2 presents a sample format for a sheltered lesson plan.

**Prepare**

Use slides, actual objects, and illustrations to review key terms that students will need to know in order to understand the instruction. Review these over and over again. If appropriate, create and assign a specific gesture, hand signal, or body motion to each term to help students remember its name. Review these terms over and over again, using the gestures and visuals. Students can be mixed and in one large group regardless of language ability. All instruction by the teacher is in English.

**Show**

Demonstrate the procedure or concept students will learn. This can be done via live demonstration or with audiovisual aids, such as a VCR. At this point, students should be placed into small, heterogeneous groups making sure that there is at least one bilingual student to act as a peer interpreter for the group, as needed. All instruction by the teacher is in English.

**Instruct**

Lecture slowly and briefly on a piece of content. Make extensive use of graphic organizers while you lecture to help students understand, process, and remember the instruction. These include outlines, charts, diagrams, and lists. Students should remain in their small heterogeneous groups (with peer translating, as needed) and instruction by the teacher is in English.

**Practice**

Provide students with cooperative hands-on activities to practice the new concepts or procedures. Students should be placed in small, homogeneous groups, by language ability. Different groups may be assigned different activities based upon their English abilities. Again, all instruction is in English.

**Check Comprehension**

Bring students back into one large mixed group and administer an exam (either performance, oral, or written). The instructions to the exam can be interpreted or translated into the students' native languages. In addition, some students may be exempt from taking certain parts of the exam, based upon their English abilities, or they may receive extra credit for responding to those parts correctly.

**Figure 2. Example of a format for a "sheltered" vocational lesson for a mixed ability group.**

**Multilingual Approaches**

Multilingual approaches are used to provide limited content instruction in the native language when there are multiple language groups in a class and/or when multilingual or even bilingual personnel are unavailable. In this approach, the instructor functions more as a facilitator of bilingual or multilingual instruction, rather than the direct provider of it. For example, the instructor makes arrangements to have certain materials translated into all appropriate languages and to provide bilingual tutoring. A key difference between a bilingual program and a multilingual approach can be seen in Cases A and B. School A has enough funds for one full-time bilingual teacher. They must choose which vocational area in which to hire this teacher and in which language. They decide to offer an auto mechanics program in Spanish. The program is strong, but non-Spanish-speaking LEP students do not benefit, nor do Spanish-speaking students who do not wish to study auto mechanics. School B also has enough funds for one full-time bilingual teacher, but elects to hire two part-time bilingual paraprofessionals, one who speaks Spanish and another who speaks Vietnamese, as well as to develop the English-speaking faculty. Inservice training is provided to all the instructors in the school on the principles of multilingual instruction (so they know how to make use of the aides) and on sheltered content techniques (so that the English-speaking instructors can make their instruction in English more comprehensible). The instructors complete bilingual aide request forms, specifying exactly what they need from the bilingual aides and when. For example, the cosmetology instructor requested that both aides translate his safety rules and exams into Spanish and Vietnamese by the third week of classes. The computer applications instructor asked the Spanish-speaking aide to sit in on her class during 4th period for the first 2 weeks to work with a small group of Spanish-speaking students. The auto mechanics instructor asked that the Vietnamese-speaking aide go over some test results with one of her students on one specific day.

The disadvantages to this approach were that both aides had to learn about more than 10 vocational areas, never allowing them to develop strong expertise in any one area. In addition, the aides had a different schedule each day. The advantages were

that more LEP students from more language backgrounds could take advantage of more vocational offerings, given limited resources. Figures 3 and 4 present examples and sources of strategies used in multilingual instruction.

| Strategy | Description | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Bilingual Peer Tutor | Bilingual student is paired with LEP student and explains instruction in the native language. Students should be seated a little off to the side and the instructor should be tolerant of their talking. | • May raise self-esteem of tutoring student<br>• No cost | • May create noise or distraction in class<br>• Limited in terms of capability of tutor |
| 2. Bilingual Community Volunteer | Bilingual individual from community helps out in class by tutoring students or translating materials. | • Provides role model for students<br>• No cost<br>• Promotes good community relations | • Availability may be inconsistent<br>• Capability may be limited |
| 3. Bilingual Aides | Paid paraprofessionals help in various classes by tutoring and translating materials. | • Availability more consistent<br>• Serves as role model<br>• Low cost | • Low pay/benefits often leads to turnover<br>• Often untrained |

**Figure 3. Examples of sources of multilingual instruction**

| Interpreting Oral Instruction | |
|---|---|
| **Strategy** | **Description** |
| Tutoring | Bilingual persons work with individuals or small groups of LEP students to review the instruction they heard in English or answer questions in the native language. This may be done in class or on a pull-out basis. |
| Audio/videotapes | Bilingual persons provide summaries of critical instruction on audio- or videotapes in the native languages of the students. This is especially recommended if continued availability of bilingual helper is in question. |
| Card Reader | Bilingual persons translate key vocabulary on card readers, such as a Language Master. Illustrations of the concept are also on the card so that the student sees the name of the concept written in both languages, as well as an illustration, and can hear the name of the concept on one track in English and on the other track in the native language. |
| Teacher | Teacher learns how to greet and praise all students in their native languages and how to pronounce their names as correctly as possible. If necessary, the teacher should learn appropriate safety expressions (such as, "stop!") in all relevant languages, for emergencies. |
| **Translating Written Instruction** | |
| **Items** | **Description** |
| Safety signs | Bilingual persons translate all safety signs and rules in the classroom, lab, hallways, and pertinent rooms in the school into all languages represented in the building. |
| Safety exams | Bilingual persons translate safety exams into all relevant languages. |
| Textbooks | Bilingual persons translate key parts of textbooks into students' native languages. Key parts include chapter summaries, headings, key terms, and captions of pictures. It is important that the vocational instructor choose the terms and headings and create the summaries to be translated. Adapted texts are kept as reference books by the instructor for future students to use. |
| Glossaries | Bilingual persons create bilingual glossaries of key technical terms. |
| Commercial materials | Teacher identifies and purchases bilingual dictionaries in all relevant languages from local bookstore and identifies and purchases technical materials in different languages from domestic dealers of international books and through friends and colleagues taking trips to other countries. |
| Noncommercial materials | Teacher seeks out and requests locally developed bilingual technical materials from other schools that have similar LEP populations. |

**Figure 4. Examples of strategies used for multilingual instruction**

# Linking Needs to Language Development

This section focuses on the English language development of LEP persons. Why should a discussion of second language acquisition theories and methods appear in a monograph for an adult and vocational education audience? As has been mentioned earlier, the needs of LEP adults have for all practical purposes fallen through the cracks of the fields that are supposed to serve them. Therefore, it makes sense for adult and vocational service providers to have at least an awareness of the theories and practices that should be applied to this special group of learners in order to strengthen articulation and personnel development.

## *Overview of Theories Related to Second Language Development*

The field of second language acquisition is, in its own right, an interdisciplinary one that has been influenced by the fields of psychology and linguistics. During the 1940s and 1950s, based on structural linguistics and behavioral psychology, the audio-lingual method (ALM) of language teaching was developed. This method provided students with activities such as repetition and substitution drills and dialogue memorization. Structural linguistics provided ALM with the discrete-point units to plug into the drills while behavioral psychology contributed the notion that language learning was merely the subconscious learning of a set of habits, hence the emphasis on repetition and memorization. Teachers were attracted to this method because it claimed to provide clear and foolproof methods and materials and it also sought to give students more of an opportunity to speak.

During the 1950s and 1960s, based on the work of Noam Chomsky, the cognitive-code method was introduced. This

method stressed the conscious cognitive awareness of rules. During the 1970s, many linguists became dissatisfied with Chomsky's syntax-based description of language, arguing that it lacked an adequate account of the semantic relationships in language. This interest in semantics or meaning together with a new interest in humanistic psychology also had an impact on the language teaching field, resulting in an emphasis in authentic communication, an emphasis that still exists more than 20 years later.

**Factors Influencing Language Acquisition**

Learning a second language is thought to be affected by many variables, including native language, age, learning situation, intelligence and aptitude, educational background, and motivation. For example, at one time researchers believed that interference from one's native language was a major hindrance to successful second language learning and that German-speaking students would find it easier to learn English, for example, than Chinese-speaking students because the former languages are more similar to one another in terms of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary than the latter language. Several experiments proved, however, that a person's native language has only a minor effect on their learning English (Ahukanna, Lund, and Gentile 1981; Dulay and Burt 1974; Gass 1984; Jain 1974; Le Compagnon 1984; Richards 1974; Taylor 1974). Researchers also believed at one time that age was a major factor in learning a new language because informal observations suggested that children could pick up a new language relatively quickly and painlessly whereas adults would struggle and always keep their foreign accent. Research has also shown that children with brain injuries could recover their language whereas adults could not (Lenneberg 1967). Although this theory has never been totally disproved, the amount of successful adult second language learning cited in the literature has certainly questioned its validity and many researchers nowadays suggest that factors such as learning situation, educational background, and motivation have more impact on adults trying to learn a new language than simply their age (Fathman and Precup 1983; Friedenberg 1991; Hill 1970, Krashen 1976; Macnamara 1973; Richards 1976). Indeed, the typical learning situations of child and adult

second language learners are different. The adult more often learns in the artificial environment of a classroom whereas children have more opportunities to learn in the natural environment of playground and school. Indeed, research suggests that even children are poor classroom second language learners. In addition, adults often have less time and fewer resources to devote to learning English as other more pressing issues (i.e., the need for gainful employment) consume them.

**Recent Theoretical Trends**

During the 1980s several developments helped to advance the field of second language instruction and strengthen the humanistic and communicative emphasis that began 20 years ago. Krashen (1985) and Cummins (1989) offered several popular principles of language development that made a large impact on second language instruction, as well as content area instruction for language minorities in the United States. The first of five principles by Krashen (1985), referred to as the *Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis*, states that there are two ways to develop a second language—through acquisition and through learning. Acquisition refers to a subconscious process such as the one used to develop one's first language. Learning refers to the process of gaining formal knowledge about the language, as in a classroom. Krashen and others believe that although formal learning has a place in second language development, classrooms should strive to create ways to help students develop English through natural, communicative methods. The second principle, commonly known as the *Natural Order Hypothesis*, states that language, especially grammar, is developed in a predictable order that cannot be controlled by a teacher and that may be different from the order in which the first language was acquired. The third hypothesis is called the *Monitor Hypothesis*. This hypothesis suggests that fluency in a second language comes from natural acquisition and that the aspects of the second language that are formally learned can be used to monitor or self-correct. The *Input Hypothesis* suggests that teachers should provide language learners with "comprehensible input," meaning that what students hear should be based on what they know already in the second language (i.e., English) plus a little bit more. The fifth principle, known as the *Affective Filter*

*Hypothesis*, states simply that creating a safe, low-anxiety environment for language development will facilitate its acquisition.

In their extensive review of Krashen's work over a decade, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) assert that with the possible exception of the Natural Order Hypothesis, Krashen's theories have remained untested and, for the most part, untestable. They make the following conclusions:

> Monitor Theory served Second Language Acquisition researchers well by offering an early attempt to make sense of a wide array of disparate research findings. In addition, Krashen's ideas themselves initially stimulated a good deal of data-based research, and forced some fresh thinking in language teaching circles. While some of the original claims no longer excite much interest among researchers and/or have been superseded by other developments, they served a valuable purpose by identifying some of the relevant issues and, where apparently wrong, by obliging critics to seek out and substantiate alternatives. (p. 249)

Cummins (1989) describes the stages of language development in two ways. The first way is in stages and follows the progression of a "pre-production" stage, which emphasizes active listening and little or no speaking; an "early production" stage, which emphasizes labeling of objects; a "speech emergence" stage, which emphasizes short phrases and simple sentences; and an "intermediate proficiency" stage, which emphasizes more complex sentences. Cummins also describes language development in terms of the initial acquisition of basic interpersonal communication skills, which he calls BICS, and the later acquisition of cognitive academic language proficiency, which he refers to as CALP.

## *Overview of Second Language Development Techniques*

Figures 5 and 6 outline traditional and communicative strategies and techniques for second language development, respectively. It is important to note that it is never advisable to rely on only

one technique. Intentional, enlightened eclecticism allows for the most variety in reaching the most students successfully. In other words, all the techniques and strategies should be used, when appropriate, and none should be used exclusively. In general, language specialists nowadays agree on the following:

- It makes more sense to focus on communication than form;
- It can be appropriate to use the students' native language;
- It is more helpful to model correctness than it is to correct;
- Topics of interest to students should be used; and
- A lot of visuals and body language should be used.

However, experienced language teachers and researchers also agree that it makes sense to strike a balance between communicative activities and formal linguistic analysis (Odlin 1994) and that sometimes it does make sense to correct a student, engage them in repetition, and provide grammar rules. Such decisions are made based on the population of students being served, their age, and, above all, their degree of self-confidence. Language teaching is a specialized field which requires specialized training. Figures 5 and 6 are provided simply to give the reader some basic information about the variety of techniques and strategies available in the field.

**Intentional, enlightened eclecticism allows for the most variety in reaching the most students successfully.**

| Name | Description | Benefits | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|---|
| Direct Method | Like immersion in that only the second language is used. Commonly used by Berlitz. If done well, uses lots of visuals. Uses question and answer a lot. No grammar instruction. | Could allow for natural acquisition. | Can create a lot of anxiety for its refusal to allow use of the native language. |
| Audio-Lingual Method | Makes extensive use of repetition, substitution drills, memorizing dialogues. Based on behaviorism. No obvious grammar instruction. | Allows learners many opportunities to talk. Simple structure for teacher to follow. Leads to good pronunciation by students. | If students repeat and memorize too much, the language often becomes meaningless. No evidence that memorizing patterns leads to ability to generalize to new. No opportunity for real communication. |
| Cognitive-Code Method | Presents rule first. Then presents exercises to practice applying it. | Gives learners tools to self-correct and create new utterances. | No opportunity to apply rules in real communicative setting. |
| Grammar-Translation Method | Learners memorize grammar rules and vocabulary lists and then practice these by translating from the first to the second language. | Gives learners tools to self-correct. Teaches translation skills. | Little opportunity for listening or speaking. All reading and writing. All language used is controlled by the teacher. |

**Figure 5. Traditional language teaching techniques and strategies**

| Name | Description | Benefits | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Physical Response (TPR) | Students carry out oral commands of teacher. Later, students respond to commands from other students. | Allows for students to go through their preproduction stage. Lowers anxiety by not requiring speaking. Having students move minimizes boredom. | |
| Natural Approach | Focus on basic communication and not on form or correctness. Uses native language in beginning. Teacher provides opportunities for students to acquire functional language by simulating real-life experiences. Grammar instruction and practice saved for homework or lab. | Lowers anxiety; motivating; students can communicate about things of immediate interest and need to them. | |
| Community Language Learning | Students sit in circle; teacher stands outside of circle; individual students tell teacher what they want to communicate to others and teacher tells them how to say it in English. Student says it, etc. Students tape record sessions. Also called counseling-learning method. | Lowers anxiety; students can communicate about things of immediate interest to them. | Teacher must have very specialized training rarely available. Can become tedious. |
| Silent Way | Teacher uses cuisinaire rods as a basis for instruction. Teachers models an utterance only once and stays silent in favor of gestures encouraging students to attempt answers and actions. | Many students find this method to be interesting and unusual. | Teacher usually controls the content of instruction, which may not be of immediate interest or need to them. Some find this frustrating. Teacher must have specialized training and tools not readily available. |
| Suggestopedia | Based on accelerated learning principles. Baroque music plays in background. Students given a new identity and role-play situations. | Lowers anxiety; motivating. | Teacher must have very specialized training not easily available. |

**Figure 6. Communicative approaches to language development**

# Conclusions

The purpose of this monograph was to present a critical review of the literature as well as to offer practical suggestions with relation to the vocational and language development of LEP adults in the United States. In doing this, over 50 documents related to bilingual vocational education, vocational special needs education, legislation, refugees, immigrants, migrant education, Native Americans, bilingual education, second language acquisition, literacy, labor policy, public education for adults, private employment training, and so forth were reviewed critically.

## *Summary of Findings*

The issue of access to vocational education services by LEP persons has been a documented concern for nearly 2 decades. Congress voiced this concern in the Vocational Amendments of 1976 and the Office of Civil Rights issued specific guidelines in 1979 for how to ensure equal access. Access should be evaluated simply by examining enrollment data; however, the suspension of VEDS in 1983 coupled with minimal requirements on the part of states to report their enrollment data and the lack of strict monitoring and enforcement at the federal level to report these data make it difficult to know empirically the exact extent to which LEP youth and adults have had access to appropriate vocational education services. **The discontinuation of VEDS may set us back at least 15 years in even knowing how well LEP adults have been able to access vocational education and decades in being able to do anything about it. This lack of information about LEP persons may be more devastating than sobering statistics would be, for sobering statistics at least provide a base upon which appropriate remedies can be proposed or mandated.** Despite the lack of reliable data, it is evident from the literature that the stated and documented policies of most postsecondary vocational education programs to require certain levels of English proficiency before a student can enroll in a vocational program deny access based on limited

**The discontinuation of VEDS may set us back at least 15 years in even knowing how well LEP adults have been able to access vocational education and decades in being able to do anything about it.**

English proficiency, a probable violation of civil rights regulations. The seeming lack of concern for these violations in the literature was surprising.

In addition to there being insufficient reliable enrollment data, the research base related to the quality of vocational education and English language services for LEP adults is yet to be well developed. The vocational special needs research, at best, pays lip service to the problems and needs of limited English proficient persons. The bilingual vocational education research is fraught with duplication of effort and, in some cases, poorly developed, unreliable methodology. In addition, there is a serious dearth of empirical data or studies that quantify anything about the quality of services for LEP adults. Most of the research directly related to LEP vocational students had been funded by the U.S. Department of Education and was not part of the "mainstream" research, with the exception of the few doctoral dissertations. This issue has not yet really entered the mainstream research.

In addition, there seemed to have been a bias against using the native language for instruction in much of the literature. This bias seemed to be based on "gut-level" feelings that using the native language would somehow prevent LEP persons from learning English, rather than any data that suggested that. Interestingly, the relatively well-developed research base on bilingual education for children actually shows an inverse relationship between the use of English as the language for instruction and English acquisition. That is, LEP children taught to read in their native language and instructed in their native language first become more proficient in English than LEP students in English immersion programs (Cummins 1989). Unfortunately, similar studies have not been conducted for LEP adults. Despite the fact that it is fairly well accepted that LEP children should first learn to read in their native language, this issue still remains fairly neglected for adults, especially in terms of practice.

Another issue absent in this research was multicultural education. Despite the fact that multicultural education is a major focus in just about all aspects of education (including elementary, middle school, and high school), no mention of it or the

need for it was found in any of the research reviewed here. Indeed, Rios (1992) in his review of Nieto (1992) stated:

> The field (of multicultural education) has failed to expand in meaningful ways to include the specific conditions faced by vocational/technical educators. This failure can be seen in Nieto's neglect of vocational/technical areas of education when providing examples and descriptions. This leads, I fear, to vocational/technical educators ignoring the multicultural literature since the literature ignores them. This is unfortunate given that disadvantaged students are more likely to attend vocational/technical programs. (p. 92)

Ironically, as the number of LEP adults has increased in the United States, efforts at the federal level to ensure that they have equitable opportunities in vocational education and appropriate English language services seem to have decreased. Hill (1990) points out that "demographic trends define our most unmet educational needs. From 1985 to the early 21st century, virtually all of our population growth will be among immigrants, children born to immigrants, and native Blacks and Hispanics born into poverty" (p. 399). ***Business Week*** ("Human Capital" 1988) warns of the looming mismatch between the skills needed for current and future jobs and the shrinking labor pool of persons with those skills. **These trends make it clear that providing access to high quality vocational training and appropriate ESL services for LEP persons has become critical to the economic and social survival of the nation.**

**These trends make it clear that providing access to high quality vocational training and appropriate ESL services for LEP persons has become critical to the economic and social survival of the nation.**

## *Recommendations*

Developing effective initiatives to improve access to high quality vocational education and ESL programs and services for LEP adults requires advocacy and action from many directions.

**The continued denial or delay of access to vocational education and other job-training initiatives based on limited English proficiency is unacceptable.** Federal and state officials must support civil rights regulations already in place with more effective enforcement. In addition, programs funded by the Carl

Perkins Act and JTPA must meet the needs of their clients, including LEP clients. If an LEP person could not be successful in a program, the program should be changed by providing the support services necessary and/or lengthening the training process. Business and industry learned decades ago that if customers' needs are not met, a business does not survive. At present, employment training and ESL initiatives are simply not meeting the needs of LEP "customers."

**The bias against providing bilingual literacy and vocational instruction for adults must cease at least unless it is proven empirically that doing so somehow prevents high quality instruction or the acquisition of English from taking place.** The suggested success of federally funded BVT programs, which, by definition, use native language support suggests that the use bilingual or multilingual instruction, along with "sheltered" vocational instruction, ESL, and VESL should be supported.

**More and better ESL services are needed for the adult LEP population.** Fewer than 2 million of the 15 million LEP adults currently have access to ESL services. In addition, those services that do exist, do little to prepare LEP adults to participate fully in U.S. life. ESL services should employ appropriate, communicative second language teaching strategies.

**The research base desperately needs to move beyond case studies, toward experimental, quasi-experimental, and, if possible, longitudinal designs.** Controlled, comparative studies on the effectiveness of bilingual vocational instruction and, in particular, the effectiveness of the BVT Model are needed. In addition, empirical studies on the importance of native language literacy for the acquisition of English literacy for adults are sorely needed.

**More training is needed to prepare vocational and ESL teachers, as well as counselors, job developers, recruiters, and administrators to serve LEP adults.** This training should be part of preservice ESL teacher training and vocational teacher certification programs. The meager "lip service" provided by most vocational special needs literature is insufficient. Effective

inservice training should be required for existing vocational, employment training, and ESL personnel. Civil rights regulations should be included in all training.

**Vocational and employment training programs should collaborate with community-based organizations.** Community-based organizations are in a unique position to reach ethnic communities and know their needs. Vocational programs are in the unique position of possessing the vocational facilities, equipment, and personnel needed. Working together can provide the right ingredients for both access and quality.

Indeed, as immigrants continue to represent the highest percentage of new entrants into the U.S. labor market, it is certainly in the national interest to attend to their vocational and English language needs.

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# Glossary

Following is a list and explanation of terminology that is used throughout this document. It is provided here to assist readers less familiar with literature related to limited-English-proficient persons or vocational education, as well as for experienced readers who may carry differing perceptions or opinions of their meanings.

*Bilingual Education*: Education using two languages, one of which is English, as media of instruction in a classroom or education program. Federally funded bilingual education programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA).

*Bilingual Vocational Training (BVT)*: The use of two languages, one of which is English, in a vocational education or training program. Also refers to a specific comprehensive instructional model that adds targeted recruiting, assessment, vocational ESL, counseling, recruiting, and coordination. (See the fifth chapter.) Federally funded BVT programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE).

*ESL*: English as a second language is specialized English language instruction that is designed for speakers of other languages. It uses special techniques to teach both language and content instruction. General ESL instruction usually teaches students how to understand, speak, read, and write English.

*Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Programs*: JTPA programs are federal programs that replace CETA programs (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) and provide funds for job training for economically disadvantaged individuals. JTPA programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Labor and focus on training individuals exclusively for private sector jobs.

*Limited English Proficient*: This term was defined officially by the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* of 1965 as

> Individuals—
>
> (1)(i) Who were not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
> (ii) Who come from environments where a language other than English is dominant; or
> (iii) Who are American Indian and Alaska Natives and who come from environments where a language other than English has had a significant impact on their level of English language proficiency; and
> (2) Who by reason thereof, have sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to deny those individuals the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in our society.
> [20 U.S.C.S2471(18), 20 U.S.C.S3283(a)(1)]

It should be noted that the federal government first used the term LESA (limited English speaking ability) before LEP was adopted. Bilingual educators argued successfully that LESA was inappropriate since many children had other than speaking problems with English. Interestingly, the ERIC System, to this date, uses this older, inappropriate descriptor, despite the fact that it has updated its descriptors for other populations, such as persons with disabilities.

*Refugee*: The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization defines refugees as aliens who are unwilling or unable to return to their country (or homeland) because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular group, or political opinion (Friedenberg and Bradley 1992, p. 4). It should be noted that it is common knowledge that U.S. refugee policies have been very uneven. In general, the United States has granted refugee status only to persons leaving Communist countries and does not, for the most part, grant refugee status to persons fleeing famine or war or persons leaving countries that enjoy friendly relations with the U.S. government. Federally funded refugee assistance

programs in the United States are administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Federally funded refugee assistance programs in overseas refugee camps are administered by the U.S. Department of State.

*Special Populations*: This expression is used here exactly as it is defined by the federal Perkins Act (1990) as—

> individuals with disabilities, educationally and economically disadvantaged individuals (including foster children), individuals of limited English proficiency, individuals who participate in programs designed to eliminate sex bias, and individuals in correctional institutions (American Vocational Association 1990, p. 162).

*Undocumented Immigrants*: Persons who are living in the United States with no valid visa or official permission. Some undocumented immigrants were actually born in the United Stated (in migrant camps or homes) or have immediate relatives who are U.S. citizens; however, they cannot prove it. Others come to the United States seeking employment, political asylum, or reunion with family members. Undocumented immigrants come from all parts of the world. It is commonly believed that most come from or through Mexico.

*Vocational Education*: This document is adopting the federal definition of: organized educational programs offering a sequence of courses or instruction in a sequence or aggregation of occupational competencies that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree (American Vocational Association 1990, p. 163).

Departing slightly from the federal definition, it would be acceptable for a vocational program to prepare an individual for further education that will later lead to employment. For the benefit of readers less familiar with vocational education, vocational education generally includes instruction related to such fields as health occupations (e.g., inhalation therapy, dental hygiene), agriculture (e.g., horticulture, farming), home economics (e.g., chef training, industrial sewing), industrial

education (e.g., automotive repair, cosmetology), communications (e.g., television production, printing), business education (e.g., office skills, bookkeeping), and retail sales (e.g., merchandising, marketing).

*Vocational ESL (VESL)*: Refers (in this document) to the teaching of occupation specific ESL, such as automotive ESL and nursing assistant ESL. The term VESL has also been used to refer to the ESL that focuses on general employability skills (e.g., job interviews) and ESL that focuses on a cluster of vocations (e.g., health occupations ESL).

*Workplace Literacy Programs*: Programs designed to upgrade the reading and writing skills in English (in the mainland United States) of employed persons. Most programs are carried out collaboratively between companies and postsecondary education agencies. Programs that serve LEP individuals must include aural/oral skill development in English, also. Workplace literacy curricula are generally customized to the specific needs of companies and are based on a literacy audit that occurs during the program planning process. Federally funded workplace literacy programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

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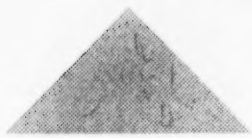

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